IN THE NEW FICTION YOUTH IS STILL SERVED

The Will Directed Eudora to Spend Four Million Dollars Sensibly

THE SILVER SIXPENCE. By Ruth Sawyer. Harper & Brothers.

Reviewed by GEORGE KENT.

"A little woman was sweeping her house and she found a silver sixpence. . . ."

This is the "once upon a time" of the "Silver Sixpence." A tiny sketch of the little woman stands broom in hand in the shadow of the large capital letter of the first word of the story. The silver sixpence is a fortune of four million dollars left with a joker on it to Eudora Pratt Post, daughter of a famous philologist. She is to be allowed an income of $20,000 a year, and if she shows an ability to handle this sensibly she is to receive the remainder.

"What," said she, "shall I do with this sixpence? I will go to market and buy a little pig." This is Chapter Two, and in the shadow of the first capital a vignette shows the little woman, basket in hand, starting out for the market.

Eudora starts out to find her pig, which, as she explains to the cook, is no ordinary grunter, but a "pig of adventure. You buy them from fairy pedlers in a sort of Hamlin town market place. You pay for them just sixpence, a silver sixpence, never more, never less; and you drive them home to live in an air castle for ever and ever. Only between the castle and the market place there's always a stile; that where the excitement comes in."

Of course she finds her pig. He is Jimmie Barnes, an ex-soldier, with a rejected play in his pocket. She feeds him, and after reading the play decides that she will invest her twenty thousand in producing the play, but—she came to a stile, but the pig would not go over the stile. Sure enough there is the little woman trying her best to push a pig over the stile formed by the left leg of a large capital "M."

Then follow troubles. It is the story of a pair of unknown youngsters trying to produce a play on Broadway with a capital which, in truth, hardly exceeds the sixpence of the story. She called the water to quench the fire because the fire wouldn't burn the stick for refusing to beat the dog which refused to bite the pig which refused to go over the stile so that the little woman could get home, "but the water would not." So it went until good friends and good fortune came to Eudora, and behold—"She carried a saucer of cream with her—without knowing it—and when the pussy saw it she lost no time in worrying the rat, but went straight with the dog, and together they bit the pig hard . . ."

As the story unfolds one grows convinced that Miss Sawyer took the oldest of fairy tales, and deliberately using it as a topic sentence raised the airy structure of a modern fairy tale upon it as a foundation. Everybody lives happily forever after, for it is a fairy tale. Good deeds yield their fruit in the last chapter as plentifully as Californian orchards. And what is most surprising, the heroine does not marry Jimmy Barnes.

And at the wedding of Eudora with the other man the resuscitated drunkard toasts with water: "Here's to the best fairy tale that ever began and may never end . . ." To which the bride, between smiles and tears, quotes whimsically, "So the pig jumped over the stile and the little woman got home that night."

One hardly expects profound characterization of so charming a story. It has been written to please, perhaps to dim the eyes a little, but not to tie fantastic thought knots in the foreheads of readers. A word for the makeup of the book. The six formal full page illustrations of the novel are good as illustrations go, but beside the capitals they are commonplace and do not add half so much to the value and appearance of the volume.

Alfred A. Knopf announces a series of Danish and Norwegian translations, a joint undertaking with the Danish publishing firm of Gyldendal, the greatest of Scandinavian publishers, founded in 1770. This house issued the works of Knut Hamsun, Nobel Prize winner for 1920, whose works Mr. Knopf is now introducing into America. The first three Borzöi-Gyldendal books are: "Jenny," a novel translated from the Danish of Sigrid Undset; "The Sworn Brothers, a Tale of the Early Days of Iceland," translated from the Danish of Gunnar Gunnarsson (the chief living Icelandic novelist), and "Grim, the Story of a Pike," translated from the Danish of Svend Fleuron.

Illustration from "The Guarded Heights."

The Stable Boy Went to College

THE GUARDED HEIGHTS. By Wadsworth Camp. Doubleday, Page & Co.

This is the tale of an aspiring young man who scaled the "guarded heights" of success, wealth, social position, &c., by sheer force of character and determination to get there. He arrives, but learns a good deal on the way up, and develops a better outfit of ideals than those he started with. Perhaps he is something of a superman, in the accomplishment of his rather remarkable feats, but he is a possibility, and not altogether a matinee idol, despite his football exploits and his magic financial successes. He finally attains to a conception of service, as well as mere self seeking. He sums up:

"You've got to admit that the soul of the whole thing is education. I don't mean education in the narrow sense that we know it here (Princeton) or any other university. I mean the opening of eyes to real communal efficiency; the comprehension of the necessity of building instead of tearing down; the birth of the desire to climb one's self rather than to try to make stronger men descend."

George starts life as a sort of stable boy on a millionaire's estate, resents being called a "stable boy" by the daughter of the magnate, fights the magnate's son and then decides he wants an education. He also determines to win that haughty girl, as well as wealth and position. He works his way through Princeton, largely by football tactics; becomes president of his class and generally shoves ahead. He enters the mysterious "Wall Street" and, of course, immediately gains a fortune. The war distracts attention for a while, but his service in France also teaches him things. And in the end, of course, he gets the girl, having found out that he is really in love with her.

The college scenes are particularly well done, from the angle of sports and college politics, both of which bulk large in the hero's vision. The story is well constructed, its narrative fluent and interest well sustained, with enough of incidental sociology to give it some body.

These Young Lovers Upset Family Plans

THE HOUSE IN DORMER FOREST. By Mary Webb. George H Doran Company.

The jacket of a book frequently contains as good fiction as is to be found between the covers. That seems to be true of this book. The reader gets the impression that he is about to dip into a story like those of Algernon Blackwood in which trees seem to come to life. As a matter of fact most of the incidents are contained within the four walls of a house which has an atmosphere of gloomy tradition and conservatism. The younger generation are stifled by the tyranny of their elders. Everything around them seems to express restraint, and the very articles of furniture, stiff and repellent and musty, have a spying and resentful atmosphere.

Of course revolt can be predicted, and it is successful. The eldest son of the house finds happiness in marrying "beneath him" and migrating to Canada; his younger brother escapes from a loveless match with a heartless woman, and the daughter meets a man who woos her in as breezy a fashion as Robin Hood wooed Maid Marion. These romances are so interrelated that they all add to the essential unity of the plot, and the author has succeeded in telling her story with a keen sense of rustic life.

Her Motto Was Live Dangerously

BODY AND SOUL. A play in four acts. By Arnold Bennett. George H. Doran Company.

There is something in this witty work of the very modern Mr. Bennett that reminds one of Congreve. It's perfectly proper, but there is an eighteenth century glitter about it. And the theme—a bloodless duel between women was dear to the heart of the makers of artificial comedy.

Moreover, the plot is a variation on the antique exchange of mistress and maid, with one rather important item lacking. At the end the mistress is left with no hero to marry.

It need not be thought that Lady Mab lacks interest. She is simply at the beginning of her career and we see her taking a hard but helpful lesson of a wiser woman. She was clever, but inexperienced, not yet clever enough. Here is her creed before the test comes:

AARON—And how is the affair to end?

LADY MAB—I don't know and I don't care. My motto is—Live Dangerously.

AARON—I had enough of living dangerously at Ypres. The thing's bound to come out and then there'll be a scandal, and how are you going to explain it?

LADY MAB—Dear youth, if you'd been on the inside of politics as I have you'd know that anything can be explained.

But she reckoned without her Blanche, who carried matters quite out of the region of society explanations. Bennett will give us more of both these women. In fact, we offer without charge a suggestion for the titles of his next two plays: "Lady Mab in America" and "Blanche and Aaron."

Novelized Drama

THE PURPLE MASK. By Louise Jordan Miln. Frederick A. Stokes Company.

Making a novel out of a successful play is often a proceeding of doubtful value. The result is apt to be stiltedly theatrical, as it by no means follows that a situation that is effective on the stage will "get across" in narrative form. This adaptation from "Le Chevalier au Masque," which Mr. Leo Ditrichstein has made familiar to many thousand theatregoers, is very cleverly done, making an engrossing story of romantic adventure and successful swashbuckling, though there is still too much of the flare of the footlights about it to make it more than a "novelization"—a variant of material that shows to better result in its original form. It is a story of Paris in the days of the First Consul, treating of the exploits of the mysterious masked Chevalier, whose plots in aid of the Royalists make much trouble for the republic, his specialty being the kidnapping of important officials. Its love story is prettily done, and some of the descriptive scenes are excellent.

Paris Reads Chadourne's Study Of a Schoolboy's Development

By PANAME.

LOUIS CHADOURNE'S new novel, "Unquiet Youth" (*"L'Inquiete Adolescence"*), Albin Michel, Paris, will undoubtedly give him a place among our best writers of fiction. Henry Bidon, in the *Revue de Paris*, asserts that Chadourne "reveals to us in the souls of children the prophetic signs of the third romanticism which we were waiting for." He calls the first and second romantic periods those following the Napoleonic wars and the War of 1870, saying that another lyric reaction was inevitable after the world war. But why talk of periods when youth is in question? Adolescence has always been romantic! But the romance of our day is overwhelmed by the simple love of life.

If it had not been for the war no doubt our young poets and imaginative prose writers would have gone on to old age giving us varied collections of verse and of stories. But the five long years of repression have had at least one effect upon all of them in common, in spite of their differences of temperament. They write without any thought of schools or formula. They carry to their readers, in their own way, their aspiration for beauty, their taste for the symbol or for more direct expression.

Louis Chadourne, who has hardly passed his twenty-fifth year, came before the public in 1916 with twenty pages of verse entitled "In Memory of a Springtime Death." The title page bore this line of Tennyson's: "It was the time when lilies blow."

We found there the influence of Laforgue, of Arthur Rimbaud. But Chadourne made evident the possession of a sensitiveness of nature and a sombre grace all his own in such lines as these:

And, caressed by a thousand cool
fingers of the grass,
My friend sleeps among the creeping
plants and moss.
There is a touch of rose at the corners
of the mouth
And the apple blossoms whiten on the
dear face
With an inexpressible tenderness.

His first prose volume, "The Master of the Ship," was published in 1919. It is a romance of adventure and fantasy, in which the imaginative element predominates, one of those books that show the influence of English novelists, above all of Stevenson and Meredith.

And now comes "Unquiet Youth," revealing mature analytical powers, transfused with the poetry of the first book. The new story contains an accurate account of the life in a Jesuit college in one of the larger provincial cities. In that ecclesiastical atmosphere we trace the development, through two years, of the adolescent Paul Demurs. Around him are placed his professors and tutors, the principal, his comrades—Jacques Lortal in chief—all those who contribute, during these months of blossoming, physical, emotional and mental, to his consciousness of himself and of life. All these characters are drawn in the liveliest manner.

The fever, the melancholy, the wearying aspirations of youth, are felt throughout the narrative. But along with these expressions of mood are given the external aspects of school, such as this, of the return after vacation:

"An evening in October, an evening of reopening; groups are formed in the main court already drowned in shadow; older boys resuming their former habits, newcomers, restless and awkward; some with eyes swollen from crying, others affecting a boldness that deceived nobody.

* * *

"I was already repelled by the odors of an opening—tar and fresh paint! At the windows clouded glass or grillwork. And the big doors that opened on the court rolled back with a scraping of iron that made the arches tremble and struck me to the soul—my soul of a prisoner.

"Night rose out of the earth; she rose even to my prison. At the first sound of the bell she spread her net over my life.

* * *

"I was done with the opening. I felt no more that anguished fright in which I found myself when I left my mother's arms, thrown into that bawling pack of unknown boys. Now I was used to it all—the apprenticeship had been hard—used to hypocrisy, to violence, to the hatreds of this child world. But I was in despair. Before me opened out a series of gray and monotonous days; to rise before it was light, dress by the lamp; a prayer mumbled in the daze of one still half asleep; study without a fire, fingers chapped, in winter; walks, three by three, in the mud, through the rain, with stupid or cruel comrades; the harsh regulations, the life without tenderness, without variety and without solitude. My gorge rose. Tears—but I forced them bravely back like a man."

What sadness, what despair! And how far we are from some of the enlightened schools of America, flooded with sunshine, spacious and comfortable, where a boy could not have that frightful sense of being in prison.

To picture a scene like this cannot be an easy task. Chadbourne has fully succeeded. And he gives all the baffling complexity of boy-nature—under its mask of bluff simplicity. The Father Superior who received Paul thus read his character from his face, as from an open book:

"I have seen you only a moment, but I know you. I have penetrated the depths of your heart. It is pure, that heart; it is trembling with generous emotion; it is open to every appeal; it would embrace the whole world; it would beat till it broke, pour out all the power of its blood. It seems to you that you can never give enough love, nor to enough other hearts. You carry like a burden the need of giving yourself. You go like the Levite who offered his ravens at the altar: your naked heart is held out in your hands. My poor child, what dangers threaten you along the route!"

But that which makes the portrait true is the union with the sensitive spirit perceived by the priest of a love of adventure, apparently inconsistent but nevertheless an essential element of the unity of youth. This bolder trait comes out in Paul's friendship with Jacques Lortal. Friendship is the touchstone of the adolescent period.

Jacques Lortal imposes not only upon his fellow students but upon his masters, by an assurance of manner, an irony of expression, which take nothing from his winning appeal. His character has a marked individuality and it is evident that he cherishes the independence of his personal life, which the uniformity of school discipline cannot take away. When Paul discovers his friend's secret love for a cousin he becomes conscious of his own need of an object of adoration. For the time being the dream-figure of Woman is enough to fill his reverie. He does not hesitate, however, to put into words his longing for adventure and his boyish loyalty to the friend and leader.

"How I would follow you," cries Paul to Jacques, "if you set out! All the ways are open. Tramp, sailor, I don't care what, so long as we go side by side and I feel the weight of your hand on my shoulder. . . . Comrade, we are made for big things, for the road without an end! With you I feel like being a man!"

Then follow the escapade outside the walls, the breaking of all restraint in a town resort, fear, remorse and at last a return to school over the same road, the scaling of the walls and the rebuke of the Father Superior.

"The Father opens a door hidden by a tapestry portiere and I found myself in a narrow monk's cell, with white walls, hard bed, crucifix, and two intertwined branches. . . . I fell on my knees, broken with fatigue and emotion, my forehead against the plank bed. The portiere fell again into place; the stern look of Father Fourmelier behind his spectacles never left my face." With all its sternness, the figure of the priest is sympathetically presented throughout.

But Paul loves life. He says: "I want to know all, to love all, to live all. I want to be happy and I am not—here."

The story is irresistible, told with an accent that is the author's own, in a highly decorative style—no less exact in statement for all that. In psychology it is at once clear, discriminating, sensitive. Paul Souday of *Le Temps* finds in it "the promise of a brilliant career for its author." To return to the novel itself, it closes in this lofty strain:

"I have come to realize that in the time given us the unsatisfied spectator of a day must draw unto himself the beauty scattered to all the farthest corners of the earth. I know that the law is not that which they taught me, the law of sorrow, of expiation, of mutilated flesh and soul austere. The law was other than that: it was to spend oneself to the limit of his powers, to give all the flower of his being and take his part in the universal joy and the universal grief, to rejoice that in the free working of cause and effect he can be no more than a blade of grass, bending under the wind but nourished by the deepest riches of the earth."

This final passage seems to me a kind of hymn of life, with something that recalls clearly the music of your great poet Whitman.

An Indictment Against a Former Prosecutor

BY ADVICE OF COUNSEL. By Arthur Train. Charles Scribner's Sons.
AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING. By Arthur Train. The Macmillan Company.

Reviewed by JAMES A. QUIGNEY.

When the first court of Book Reviewers opened and the good Judge Literare E. Ditor took the bench supreme silence reigned. Arthur Train noiselessly made his way to the witness stand, past the reporters' table and round back of the jury box. The judge, a pleasant-faced, rather elderly man, bowed gravely to him, indicated where he should sit and administered the oath to Train himself, subtly dwelling upon the phrase "the whole truth," and raising his eyes heavenward as he solemnly pronounced the words "so help you God!" To which Train, with right hand uplifted, replied "I do."

Behind him upon the courtroom wall towered the Goddess of the Law of Literature, blindfolded with a pair of large horn-rimmed spectacles, holding aloft the scales of justice. In one pan rested a typewriter, a pen, ink and some paper, which was balanced on the opposite side by an unmerciful looking stack of rejection slips with their gaudy colors of pink, green, yellow and other shades, in addition to a few checks that stood for authors' royalties. Not far from Train sat in the silken robes of his office the judge who cleverly administered the law. In front of him, treacherously smiling, stood the cynical, bullet-headed Critic. At a distance, Mr. Tutt of the celebrated firm of Tutt & Tutt, attorneys and counsellors at law, leaned on his elbows.

Two days before, an indictment had been presented to the author that somewhat disturbed him. It ran as follows:

First Court of Book Reviewers of the Peace and Comfort In and For the States of the United States.

The General Public of the United States Against
ARTHUR TRAIN.

The Grand Jury of the States of the United States, by this indictment, accuse Arthur Train of the outrageous crime of disturbing the peace of mind of the general public, committed as follows:

The said Arthur Train of the city of New York, aforesaid, on a day in March, in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and twenty-one, had published a book from his own pen entitled, "By Advice of Counsel."

And afterward, to wit, on still another day in March, in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and twenty-one, within a week of the first book, hereinafter explained, aforesaid, did feloniously have published another book, entitled "As It Was in the Beginning," the first book being then and there living and in full life, against the form of the statute in such case made and provided and against the peace and comfort of the general reading public of the United States.

IMA CRITIC,
Attorney-General.

Such was the precise accusation against the "isosceles-triangular" client, who now sat so limply and disjointedly before Mr. Tutt, "with a certain peculiar air of assurance all his own, as if, though surprised and somewhat annoyed at the Grand Jury's interference with his private affairs, he was nevertheless—being captain of his own soul—not particularly disturbed about the matter."

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"Did you not write and have published a book with the title 'By Advice of Counsel' in the early part of March?" snapped the jeering Critic as proceedings were begun.

"I did."

"Did you not write and have published a book with the title 'As It Was in the Beginning' within a week of the first, while the aforesaid was still in full life?"

"I did."

"Do you not plead guilty then in having committed a felony against the general reading public of the United States?"

Mr. Tutt was on his feet. "One moment!" he cried, "May I ask a few preliminary questions?" The court signified acquiescence.

"Had you any idea that the publishers of your books were to bring them out within a week of each other?"

"No!" was the reply.

"Were these books respectively of such character that either one would hurt the sale of the other?"

"Neither. The first book is merely a collection of short stories of two famous old characters known to many magazine readers. The second is a novel about a New York lawyer who escapes from 'the squirrel cage' by a flying visit to England, with the intent of flying back the Saturday following his arrival. But England's business make-up is entirely different from our own and therefore the lawyer extends his stay simply because of the English system. But the system appeals to him and so does the daughter of Lord Congreve. He decides for himself the time he will return and when that time comes he will take with him a part of England, Muriel Congreve."

His pathetic statement had struck home. The audience was amazed and likewise the judge and jury. Tutt looked at Critic. He in turn looked at the Judge and then gave a shrug of his shoulders. Then the Judge turned to the expectant jury and said, in apologetic tones:

"Gentlemen of the jury, where the people have failed to prove the defendant's guilt beyond a reasonable doubt it is the duty of the court to direct a verdict. In this case, though by inference the testimony points strongly toward the accused, there is no direct proof against him and I am accordingly constrained to instruct you to return a verdict of not guilty."

So the case against Arthur Train was closed and his books may be brought out together and by different publishers as long as they do not conflict with one another.

Arthur Train.